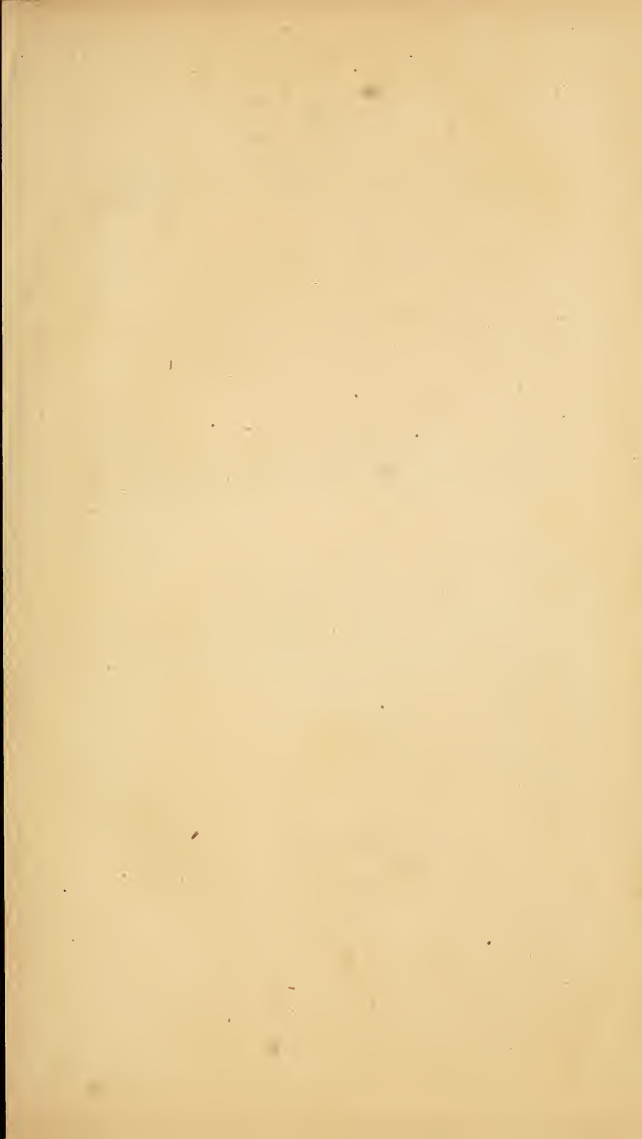


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THE
LOSS OF THE AUSTRALIA:

A NARRATIVE OF
THE LOSS OF THE BRIG AUSTRALIA, BY FIRE,
ON HER VOYAGE FROM LEITH TO SYDNEY.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
THE SUFFERINGS, RELIGIOUS EXERCISES, AND FINAL
RESCUE OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS.

EDITED BY THE
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DUNDEE.

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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

THE short and simple narrative which is introduced to public notice in the following pages, is a *plain statement of facts*; and is submitted with unaffected diffidence, as an humble memorial of "the loving kindness of the Lord, and his great goodness," in a season of extremity. The only preface which can be necessary in a publication so inconsiderable, is to certify its authenticity, by avowing the name and affixing the responsibility of the author.

The following simple history of the narrative will, it is presumed, be sufficient to remove all scruples as to its truthfulness and reality. In the summer of 1844, Captain Adam Yule, of Dundee, committed into my hands a large manuscript, containing the substance of the following pages, with a request that I would use my utmost freedom with the materials, and give them to the world in any form that was most agreeable to myself. I learned that he had drawn up his account at the Cape of Good Hope, immediately after the occurrences detailed had happened, and that he had consigned it on his return to this country, into the hands of a venerable friend, who had retained it for two years, without finding the leisure necessary to correct and prepare it for publication. In the execution of the trust reposed in me, I considered it proper to reconstruct the narrative out of the materials

with which I was furnished ; retaining, at the same time, every important incident in its place, and in no case suppressing the utterance of the devout experience of the writer. For the fidelity with which I have adhered to the original facts, I hold myself responsible alike to Captain Yule and to the Christian public ; and I am happy to acknowledge that I have received, both from himself and from several of his fellow-survivors in that disastrous voyage, the most pleasing assurances of the truthfulness of the statements. It is necessary that, in such circumstances, I should exonerate Captain Yule from all responsibility as to the *manner* in which these facts are now submitted to the public,—as I must be content, undividedly, to bear whatever censure criticism may condescend to offer on the *literature* of this publication.

The Editor dismisses his humble labours with satisfaction, that he has been permitted to aid in rearing this simple tribute on behalf of a class of men who must always hold a warm place in his interest and affections ; and whose perilous sacrifices of personal comfort and of religious opportunities, in their calling, entitle them to the cordial sympathy of all Christians. He accompanies the brief narrative with his prayers, that it may be the instrument of spiritual benefit to many souls, and may fulfil the only design in its publication, in promoting piety among sailors, and confirming the promise of God, “ that He is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.”

JAMES R. M'GAVIN.

DUNDEE, December, 1845.

LIST OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS.

Adam Yule, master; Alexander Wallace, mate; John Yule, second mate; William Yule, carpenter; George Young, steward; Thomas Bisset, cook; George Davidson, Thomas Souter, William Hay, John Allan, seamen; Benjamin Aitken, Alexander Matthew, and James Hill, apprentices.

CABIN PASSENGERS.

Mr. Thomas Harris, London.
Mr. ————, surgeon.
Miss Margaret Brown, Fife.
Miss Ann Sim, Edinburgh.
Miss Ann Knight, Turrif.

STEERAGE PASSENGERS.

John Henderson, miller.
Robert Elphinston.
James Elphinston.
James M'Lauchlan, farmer.
George Peat.
John Chisholm,
George Chisholm,
Jean Chisholm,
Agnes Chisholm,
Margery Chisholm, } An orphan family.

LOSS OF THE AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE AND CATASTROPHE.

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.”

THE life of a sailor, beyond the lot of most other men, discloses to a reflecting mind an impressive series of divine mercies and judgments. In a calling so singularly chequered by varying scenes and changing incidents, life is spent amidst remarkable adventures and romantic deliverances, so as to invest its course with an unusual interest, and to crowd its experience with the most solemn and memorable instructions of Heaven.

The individual by whom the materials of the following narrative were contributed, is

himself a sailor ; and has borne a prominent part in the painful scenes which are here depicted. His life has been prolonged by divine mercy through almost every scene of sea-faring experience, and it has been preserved by scarcely less than miracle, amidst perils to which not many sailors have been exposed. The following story, in all its facts and experience, is properly his own ; and, therefore, throughout he is preserved as the speaker. Only in the matter of construction and expression, another party must be held responsible, into whose hands the full materials were committed to give them form. It was the devout desire of the original party not to forget Jehovah's benefits ; *having*, like the Psalmist (Psalm lxvi. 12,) "gone through fire and through water," he felt solicitous to say with the same holy minstrel, (verse 16,) "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul."

In the autumn of 1840, I accepted the command of the *Australia*, of Dundee, bound

for Sydney, New South Wales. On the 2d October, our vessel set sail from Leith, having on board a general cargo of merchandize. Our ship's company consisted of twenty-eight persons, being thirteen of a crew, and fifteen passengers. My heart was buoyant with hope and pleasing anticipations as I bade my family farewell, and weighed anchor for my destination. Everything gave promise of a propitious voyage. Our vessel was new and well found in every necessary, the crew were able, and well selected, and the passengers were agreeable, all being full of hope and fearless of evil. Indeed, if we could have anticipated results, my company were most unlikely and ill selected for enduring the hardships that awaited us; three of the crew being but apprentice lads, and of the passengers, five being females, besides two boys and a girl of very tender years. But who has not seen, that while the helpless are sometimes the first to be visited by the storm, they frequently are found, also, to survive its fury; when the strong, who were the most likely to

brave its blast, are borne down and destroyed before it? "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong—for man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, so are the sons of men snared, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

The commencement of our voyage was sufficiently prosperous. We rounded Cape Wrath by an easy progress, and were in the latitude of Madeira in seven days from Cape Clear. Nothing remarkable occurred till after our departure from Rio de Janeiro, where we touched for a few days in the beginning of December. We were then baffled with boisterous weather and contrary winds, till the 27th of that month, when the wind became fair, and the weather improved. On the evening of the 29th, December, we had all sails set, with a strong fair wind, and a heavy sea. At this time, by recent observations, I found that we must have been in latitude $35^{\circ} 51'$ south, and longitude $8^{\circ} 8'$ east of Greenwich, or, in round numbers, about 600

miles from the nearest land, which was the Cape of Good Hope. Our passengers had as usual walked the deck after tea, until about eight o'clock, when, feeling it cold, they had gone below. In less than half an hour, I followed them to the after-cabin, having given the chief mate his orders for the night. We were all in excellent spirits, and speculating how soon, and how safely we should reach our destination with so good a wind. Alas! how little did we know the horrors that awaited us: destruction even then had begun its frightful work, and was silently, but too surely consuming our solitary and sea-girded habitation. Soon after entering the cabin, I was affected with a sense of something burning; supposing that the ladies might have set something in their bed-rooms on fire, I ran forward in the dark to their cabins, but found everything safe. The sense of burning, however, became more strong and decided. I therefore snatched a light, and found, to my dismay, that smoke was issuing from the fore bulk-head on the

starboard side of the mainmast. It was but the work of an instant to clear away the goods with which that untenanted berth had been filled, if possible to reach the seat of the fire. My brother William, and four or five seamen withstood resolutely the suffocating smoke that surrounded them in this labour, while others stood arranged and ready with buckets full of water, to dash upon the first appearance of fire. But what was our horror to find, on emptying the berth, that the evil lay deeper, and was every moment on the increase; in short, that the *ship's hold was on fire!* This was too soon apparent, for, on removing a plank from the bulk-head, we saw the whole interior of the vessel like the womb of a volcano, and the entire cargo of coals and combustible goods in a blaze. It was impossible, from the superincumbent and intervening goods, to pour in water in sufficient quantity to extinguish so extensive a conflagration; this I perceived at first glance, and therefore at once drove in the board to confine the flames, feeling, in the agony of des-

pair, that *the ship was irrecoverably to be consumed.*

It was an awful moment to every one of us. To die on so sudden summoning, and to be summoned to *such a death*, were sufficient to appal the stoutest heart. What were we to do?—beneath us was a burning bier, and all beyond was a black and angry abyss. We could not abide where we were, and to go forth scarcely promised a better fate, for no little boat could live long in such a sea. I saw in the countenances of the haggard beings around me, that they were fully alive to either fate. Some, frantic with terror, sent forth cries, which found no echo from our shoreless and surrounding solitude; others clung around me, tormenting me with questions which I could not answer; while the remainder stood silent and trembling, as if the presence of death had smitten them dumb. It was easy to discern their emotions in their demeanour—but why should I dilate on others' feelings, when I can but faintly recall my own? I have a confused recollec-

tion of a tumultuous throng of momentous interests rushing upon me with an overpowering rapidity, and of a certain effort of self-possession seeking to stem, while it received the tide. Visions of danger—of self-protection—of death, mingled with thoughts of duty—of home—of a probably widowed wife and fatherless family—all flashed wildly through my brain. I felt that I stood in immediate contact with death, and the solemnities of a judgment to come rose in array before me. It is not for me to reveal the secrecies of such a situation; but I can only say as one who has been “in deaths oft,” and with all the solemnities of that hour before me, that I know but one confidence that has proved unfailing and infallible in such a crisis, and that is, *a personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and an implicit reliance on his perfect work.*

As I looked around upon the shivering group that had enclosed me, I became filled with one solemn conviction,—it was my official responsibility; and I was fired with

one desperate effort—the effort of rescue. Without a moment's delay, therefore, the plan of arrangements was fixed, and the orders were given. The mate was instructed to ease sail, and heave the ship to, in order to draw the fire forward, and clear the after-part of the ship from smoke, so as to allow us to labour with efficiency. A hole was then cut in the deck, above the strongest seat of the fire, and an uninterrupted stream of water poured down through the opening; but the rapid increase of smoke and flame soon convinced us that all idea of subduing the fire, and saving the ship, was impracticable. We then covered the deck with the loose sails, to smother, as far as possible, the smoke and flame; for by this time the deck-plank was blistering beneath our feet, and it was impossible to breathe amidships. Our next efforts were directed to launching the long-boat, which, as usual, was secured on deck. This proved to be a work of great difficulty, and occasioned considerable delay, not unmixed with danger. The boat had been

converted into a stall for two live bulls, and in attempting to get them over the side, one of them, in the confusion, unfortunately got out of the slings, and ran frantic along the deck. This accident, as may be supposed, greatly increased the general consternation, and much invaluable time was lost ere the ferocious animal could be secured and despatched; so that when the tackles were hooked on to the boat, it was impossible to breathe in that part of the ship. The men could only take a hasty pull and then rush aft to breathe; and it was only after repeated efforts, and great perseverance, that we got the bow of the long-boat sufficiently high for launching. We then manned the after-tackle, but, unfortunately, it unhooked aloft, and it required enormous exertions to get it replaced; however, by fastening some guys round the rigging, and through the blessing of God on our efforts, we at length got the boat launched, and two good hands into her. To pass her aft, and preserve her from swamping, were matters of great labour; for the

roll of the sea was so heavy, and the smoke was so dense over the lee-side, that we could not see what we were doing. While these things were going on, I had ordered the steward to prepare some bread, and small stores, to put into the boat ; and I now went down to see what progress he had made for our supply, leaving the mate on deck to roll some water casks aft, and after slinging them well, to drop them over the quarter to the long-boat. Every moment, by this time, was invaluable ; for the flames had now made their appearance up the fore-hatch, and very soon caught the rigging and sails. I can never sufficiently commend the energy of the mate, and the steadiness and good behaviour of the men during these exertions. There was no swearing, no inclination to fly to spirits ; every man was obedient to orders, and anxious to do his utmost. Even the passengers revealed the same excellent spirit ; I heard no screams from the females, and even the children ceased to cry. All seemed to feel that every effort was making for their

safety, and they silently acquiesced in the arrangements.

Our preparations were soon made. Two small bags of bread, two hams, two cheeses, two or three canisters of preserved meat, and a few bottles of wine, with a sextant, some charts, an almanac, my Bible and Psalm-Book, and some flannel shirts and blankets, &c., were all that we could secure amid the suffocating smoke. These were immediately carried on deck, and secured in the skiff, which still hung in the stern-davits. The mate, in the meantime, had rolled two casks of rain-water aft, which was all that he could obtain. To secure their safe transmission to the long-boat in such a sea, was no easy matter. I therefore confided to the mate to lift them into the boat, and he left the ship for this purpose. The first cask was well directed, but in lifting it over the gunwale of the boat, it fell upon the mate and another seaman, who were dreadfully bruised; it was a marvel, indeed, that they were not killed. In consequence of their being disa-

bled, the second cask got out of the slings, and we lost it. This was a very serious matter, but it was irreparable, as the whole front part of the ship was now on fire, and quite impassable for any purpose. Finding that I could make no further provision for the people, I put the ladies and three children in the skiff, with two seamen, who were ordered to cut the faulds, so soon as she touched the water, while we lowered them from the davits. This was done in safety, which was a special mercy, as the boat was greatly overloaded; having, besides the stores, and the above company, two of the passengers, who, unknown to me, had concealed themselves under the thafts. There were now left on board the ship five or six persons, together with myself. These immediately launched the small boat, which hung on the main-deck, and got safely into it, so that, for a little season, I stood the last living thing amid the burning mass. My position was alike novel and awful; two horrid deaths were before me—one on either hand—and I stood but

upon a point between them. At that moment the flame was playing fearfully over all the rigging; the topping-lifts had been burnt through, and the trysail-boom came swinging down on the taffrail; the trysail itself was on fire as high up as the third reef, and the mainmast every moment was expected to fall above me. With a heavy heart I felt that I must quit for ever the ship and property, of which I could no longer retain the charge. Another and a still more sacred trust was beneath me; and as I looked down upon the twenty-seven hapless beings, ghastly amid the glare of the burning ship, and tossed above the billows that soon might be our mutual tomb, I felt—oh, how I felt—that the charge of such beings was *not mine*. Calmly as my momentary solitude would permit, I lifted my soul to Him who “rules the raging of the sea,” and cast myself and company into his everlasting arms. If ever fervent prayer was productive of immediate peace, my heart felt it at that moment; for the words of God thrilled through me at the

instant, as if his own finger had inscribed them upon my bosom,—“Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee.” I was recalled, however, from my reverie by the mate imploring me to come into the boat, and as I could do no more, I obeyed the summons; so, sliding down the tackles, I got safely into the boat, among my wretched companions. At that instant the mainmast fell with a tremendous crash over the side, and the flames shot up with frightful fury from the cabin-skylight, as if to intimate that the work of destruction was nearly completed, and that our ill-fated vessel was no longer fit to be a refuge for living beings.

“One woe was past;” and although we knew well that others were awaiting us, it was still an act of marvellous mercy that so many persons had “come out of the midst of the fire” with “not a hair of any of our heads singed.” It is needless to speculate as to the cause of our disaster; but, as it undoubtedly began in the lower hold among the coals, it was most probably produced by

spontaneous combustion. When the last person left the ship, it must have been about eleven o'clock, so that in less than three hours we had been cast forth from security and comfort, amidst cold, and nakedness, and watching, to face dangers and deaths in their most dismal aspect. It was my design to have remained by the wreck till dawn, in the hope—a hope, alas, that was not to be realized—that some friendly ship might be attracted by the burning to our rescue. But the boats were in danger of being stove, it being impossible at all times to prevent their chafing; and, ere long, the rope by which we were made fast to the wreck became burnt through, so that we were compelled to part even from the desolate companionship of the burning vessel, and were cast adrift at midnight, upon the black and boundless solitude of ocean. Still clinging to the hope of rescue, I sought to keep the boats as close to the wreck as possible, and made the best distribution of our company that I could. I took charge of the long-boat with other sixteen

souls in it ; seven were in the skiff, and four in the small-boat, and there we drifted till morning came.

It would be impossible to describe the grandeur and horrors of that night. Let fancy paint, if it may, so many hapless beings huddled together unpreparedly, exposed without shelter to the cold night sky, and expecting every moment to be swallowed up. Ocean was ever fretting, and curveting, and plunging beneath us, as if it had wrathfully resolved to cast us from its "crested mane." The sky all above and around was one scene of blackness, unbroken by one opening in its cloud, and unblest by the radiance of one solitary star. Behind the boats—in the region whither we were drifting, every thing was dark as the grave. Light indeed attended us throughout that lone midnight, but it was the glare of destruction, which, as it contended with the surrounding darkness, only increased its horror. The flames long played in magnificent grandeur, kindling the dark sky above, and reflecting their lurid gleam

from the ridge of every billow, as if they mocked our misery by their majestic triumph. And ever and anon came some terrific explosion—probably of the ship's spirits—which struck like a death-knell upon our hearts, proclaiming that the work of ruin was well nigh accomplished.

In this condition of extremity, one only hope remained to us—one last grand anchorhold to preserve us from despair. We remembered Him “who maketh darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies;” We thought of Him as “the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea, who stilleth the noise of the sea, and the noise of their waves.” And there, “out of the depths we cried unto Him.” Mingling with the voice of the wind and waters, and rising above their murmurs, the sound of our praise and supplications ascended on the midnight air, and was heard before the throne. It was a sacred relief to our heavy hearts to feel that the eye of God

still watched over us in our misery, and that his ear was open to our cry: and although we knew not the dark path that lay before us, yet we sought it with His words on our lips,—“The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. THE LORD ON HIGH IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NOISE OF MANY WATERS, YEA THAN THE MIGHTY WAVES OF THE SEA.”

CHAPTER II.

THE SUFFERINGS IN THE BOATS.

“They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.”

“Joy cometh in the morning ;” but it was not so with our forlorn company. Daylight of the 30th December dawned only to reveal our mutual wretchedness, and to aggravate our distress. Our hapless vessel vanished in the distance as daylight appeared, and our hearts fainted to discover that no friendly sail was visible within the range of the horizon, for our rescue. Left alone in that vast solitude of sea and sky, it only now remained for us to seek our safety by making for the nearest land, or to die in the endeavour. We were but “in the beginning of sorrows,” and our first business was to commit ourselves to

God. Gathering our boats as closely as possible together, we joined in singing the 38th Psalm, 1—5th verses, and by prayer “poured out our complaint before God, and showed before him our trouble.” Being comforted by this exercise, we immediately thereafter commenced active preparations for our melancholy voyage. Our first object was to rig a mast and sail in each boat. We had only oars to form our masts, and a top-gallant studding sail and royal fore sails. With some small lines, shrouds and stays were made; and by six o’clock in the morning all the three boats were under sail for our destination. I then commenced to overhaul our stock of supplies, and found that we had two small cheeses, two hams, only about twenty-four gallons of water, and seventy or eighty pounds of bread, which was damaged by salt water, with a half gallon of rum, a half gallon of brandy, and a few bottles of wine. This supply was by no means adequate to sustain life among such a company for many days. I therefore called the boats together,

and told the people that we could not expect to make the land in less than ten or twelve days, and it might take a day or two more ; that our stock of water and provisions was far short, and that therefore we must come at once on short allowance. I am happy to say that all acquiesced with the proposition, and, indeed, showed throughout the happiest spirit of subordination and harmony. Our small allowance was then distributed, which gave a little bread, which was repeated in the evening, and *only three table spoonfuls of water to each per day*. At noon I got an observation for the latitude, and found it 35 deg. 37 sec. south, and longitude 9 deg. 15 sec. east of Greenwich. We again engaged in the worship of God, and sought to keep the boats in close company. But as day declined the weather looked wild ; and the men in the small boat, being afraid of her capsizing during the night, I had to divide her company between the long-boat and skiff, and cast her adrift. Nine persons were thus in the skiff, and nineteen in the long-

boat, which sank us very deep in the water, and uncomfortably overcrowded us. The long-boat was particularly uncomfortable, being lumbered with our small stock of provisions ; and, having been used as a stall for cattle, we were not only soaked with seawater, but smeared with filth. Our distressing situation may easily be supposed, with a promiscuous company of ladies and children crowded together without the means of separation, and exposed night and day to the action of all the rudest elements. We however washed our boat, which served somewhat to improve our condition. At the close of day we again sang praise to God, and implored his protection and blessing. The regular performance of this duty was a great comfort to us in our misery, and I was well assisted in its discharge by Mr. Wallace the mate, my brother William, and nephew John, as well as by some of the passengers, all of whom occasionally conducted the devotions. We made it our endeavour to unite both boats in one exercise of daily praise and prayer, and

when this was impracticable, service was separately conducted in the skiff by George Davidson and Thomas Souter, seamen. In no case, to the best of my knowledge, was this duty omitted from being performed three times a day, so that we could say, with the Psalmist, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, we pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear our voice."

During the night the wind blew freshly from the south, and the sea was so heavy, that I was obliged to deviate to the north of my course a little, in the hope of regaining my leeway by a future and more favourable wind and sea. But although it would have been hard work to fetch the Cape of Good Hope even with a fairer wind, we could not help ourselves, as our little boats could not breast the billows, and yet we hauled them as close to the wind as we dared. The moon shone on us during a part of that night, and enabled us to keep the boats together; but when she set, we were greatly distressed by the danger of separating. At length day

light came to the relief of our sleepless and anxious watching, but only to the increase of our other sorrows. This day the people pleaded with tears for an increase to the allowance of water, and my soul yearned for the petitioners; but although I felt the strength of their craving in my own fevered frame, I dared not accede to their request. I knew that our distance from land rendered it certain destruction for us to increase our expenditure, unless, indeed, some friendly bark should cross our path, which we could not certify, and which certainly never occurred. I therefore earnestly exhorted them to make the best use of the small quantity allowed, by dividing it into three daily distributions. This was done in the long-boat, and we felt the benefit of it, in the more frequent moistening of our palate, and the easier mastication of our bread. At noon I obtained an observation, and found the latitude 34 deg. 49 min. south, and calculated our longitude at 11 deg. 40 min. east. A little wine was distributed this day along with the usual allowance

of water, which was greedily swallowed. Towards evening another earnest appeal came from the people in the skiff for an additional allowance of water, which I was compelled to refuse. Contrary to my injunctions, they had swallowed their allowance at one draught, and were therefore in agony till the time for next day's supply. I learned, also, that some of them had begun to drink salt water, which I sought in vain to prevent. I told them that if they persisted they would become delirious, which, alas ! was soon too painfully realized.

The wind lulled a little about midnight, but the darkness greatly distressed us, and about four o'clock we lost sight of the skiff. We immediately lowered our sail, and with difficulty got a light in the lantern, awaiting the result with intense anxiety. For half an hour this distressing suspense continued, when, to our great relief, the boat re-appeared. Night ere long again departed, but with each returning day we found the sufferings of our company on the increase ; cold and

thirst were making shocking inroads among us. Up to this time we had never been able to stretch our stiffened limbs, and we had all the while been thoroughly drenched by the constant action of the sea. This day, however, being more favourable, we got our clothes partially dried, and managed to erect a temporary bulwark of blankets on the weather-side, which afforded some additional shelter from the elements. This enabled us to perform our worship "with a little reviving," and we partook of our scanty allowance with increasing appetite. My observation for this day was latitude 34 deg. 30 min. south, and longitude 12 deg. 49 min. east. Towards evening the wind and sea increased from the south-west, and as I could not make my course good, I allowed the boats to run, so as to make all the easting possible. At midnight the moon went down, and as the sea ran very high, we had difficulty to preserve the boats in company during the darkness. Our candles were scanty, so that we could not burn constant light, and we longed ex-

ceedingly for the coming of day. By this time our distresses were very grievous ; the midnight sea had thoroughly soaked every one of us, and several of our people gave decisive symptoms of insanity, especially two of the passengers in the skiff, who had persisted in drinking the salt water. In the morning the weather became more moderate ; at noon we were in latitude 34 deg. 34 min. south, and longitude 14 deg. 37 min. east, so that I concluded, if the weather should keep favourable, that in three days' sail we might make the land. The wretched condition of our company towards evening constrained me to administer a little wine, and an additional half of a wine glassful of water to each ; I exhorted them to use it sparingly, as I dreaded a stormy night ; but the people in the skiff consumed it on the instant. Milder weather succeeded in the morning, which enabled us to dry our clothes. In the afternoon we rigged a temporary jib, with a sheet for a studding-sail, and the crew of the skiff did the same. I tried for an observation, and found

the latitude 34 deg. 12 min, but my chronometer by this time was nearly useless for the calculation of longitude, and I guessed it to be 15 deg. 47 min. east. The cry for water at this time became heart-rending, especially from the children in the skiff; their piercing screams went to my inmost soul, and yet I durst not be subdued by them; therefore, with a feigned sternness, which my heart disallowed, I was compelled to order the skiff to shear off, so that I might at least be released from listening to their anguish, which I could neither bear nor brave.

Again evening and morning came, and still as our course lengthened our woes increased. The night and morning were intensely cold, and a hollow sea again had drenched us to the skin. The people seemed to have reached a state of utter exhaustion, not unmingled with the indifference of despair. They appeared to have lost all relish for food, and water was the only cry; several of them had persisted in taking salt water, which it was impossible to prevent, as there

were but eight or nine inches of free side from the sea, so that they put out their hand through the night and took it. The consequence was, that two in our boat, and the same number in the skiff, were quite delirious, while several others in both boats gave symptoms of the same distressing state. The ladies throughout behaved with magnanimity, and even the endurance of the children was admirable. The best arrangements were indeed made for them which we could command. We appropriated the stern sheets to the ladies, as the most comfortable ; and for their accommodation I had to sit upon the gunwale, while steering the boat. This post was only filled by the mate and myself, as there was no other to whom I could confide it ; but he, being very unwell, from having been crushed by the water-cask, the heaviest share of the duty devolved upon me. The skiff was managed by Thomas Souter and George Davidson, whose excellent seamanship was beyond all praise. The people seemed to be so depressed and inclined to

sleep, that in the evening I mixed a little rum with their allowance of water, which partially revived them. The night was setting in very gloomily, and as our evening song mingled with the rising tempest, I am sure that our hearts sympathized with its plea. It was Psalm vi.

Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not ;
Nor in thy hot rage chasten me, &c.

Our chapter this evening was Acts xxvii., and we prayed that the God who stood by Paul, in his perils and shipwreck, would preserve the lives of all who sailed with us. The night was very dark and stormy, with a heavy sea ; every wave was broken on the top, and we were nearly smothered by the spray. It required all our skill to keep the sea from breaking on board of us. I gave orders to the men to stand ready with our three buckets, in case, amid the darkness, any wave should make a breach on us. At length, about midnight, one frightful billow rose close to the boat, and broke right over

us. A slight scream rose from our company at the instant, and I thought our fate was sealed, as the boat was nearly filled with water, and staggered under the stroke, as if settling in the trough of the sea. I, however, got her right before the wind, and during a short *smooth* which providentially succeeded, she was bailed with all despatch, and righted. The skiff had been in no better condition, and nothing but the most masterly seamanship could have preserved her afloat. Frequently we lost sight of each other during the darkness, and our matches being wet, we could no longer hold out a signal-light as formerly. "By the good hand of our God upon us," however, we were mutually preserved, and kept together during that dismal night.

A frowning morning succeeded, and found our companions worse than ever. I immediately served a small allowance, which revived us all; indeed I was at this time myself greatly exhausted, having kept the helm without stirring for thirty-six hours, on account of the illness of the mate. My sextant hav-

ing been spoiled by the loss of its top, I was now no longer able to keep our reckoning, except by guess. I was in hopes that the gale would subside at noon, and permit us to take a more southerly course, so as to fetch the Cape, but I was unhappily disappointed. The storm only increased in severity, and the sea broke around us with redoubled fury, driving in the temporary bulwarks, which we had re-erected after the night's disaster. I calculated that at this time we were about seventy miles from land, but the brackish colour of the water led me to suppose that we might be nearer, and, being afraid to make the coast in the night, I resolved to stand to the north till midnight, it being impossible to ride the boats by bridle or otherwise in such a sea. To this all parties gave consent, and I issued orders accordingly. I confess that I had almost no hope of seeing morning, and therefore told the skiff's crew that if anything happened to us through the night, they must stand in for the land, and do the best they could. My gloomy forebodings were shared

by all, except those—to the number of six or seven—who were by this time insensible to everything around them. After partaking of our allowance with thanksgiving, we committed ourselves to the Lord of life and death, and took leave of each other without the hope of meeting again in this world. In the early part of the night our little boats behaved admirably in their conflict with the tremendous sea, and at eleven o'clock we shifted our small sail, and stood directly in for the land. The skiff followed, but at midnight the wind and waves increased in fury, and a tremendous billow broke close astern of us, which seemed to swallow up our dear companions. We strained our aching vision to catch the re-appearance of their little mast, but in vain ; with trembling anxiety we then lowered down our sail, and, after great difficulty, got a light in the lantern, but it was soon extinguished, and, after long and anxious waiting, no trace of the skiff was visible, and we gave them up as lost, believing “that the deep had covered them.” The sea was breaking so

heavily over the stern, while there was no *way* on our boat, that we were in danger of foundering, so that we were compelled, with deep distress, again to make sail, and pursue our course. Life was now faint within me, and I felt as if "the bitterness of death was past." A cold shiver had seized my frame, and I was inclined to resign all further effort. By the administration of a tea-spoonful of wine, however, I rallied a little, and maintained my post at the helm throughout the night.

Morning at length broke, but there was no appearance of our companions, and all hope of their restoration departed. Our morning meal was consumed in melancholy silence, and our "grief was heavier than our groaning" in our morning prayers. Four persons in our boat were in extreme exhaustion, and one of them—a passenger—named George Peat, was evidently in a dying state. The weather looked more mild, and I sought to rally their spirits: with three of them I partially succeeded, but Peat took no notice of anything, save to suck greedily his allowance

of water. In the forenoon the sun broke through the clouds, and shed an agreeable warmth to which we had long been strangers, so that we took off our wet clothes, and hung them up to dry. The hope of seeing land revived the love of life within us, and, with the former exceptions, our company, in spite of the absence of our other boat, were in better spirits. At eleven o'clock A.M. the mate relieved me from the helm, and all were intent in looking out for the land. In this we were disappointed; but the mate thought he descried something ahead like a mast or a sail. All eyes were turned in the direction with eagerness, but for a considerable time we could see nothing. At last another person saw something on the top of a heavy wave, and, as we drew nearer, a mast without a sail became distinctly visible. Could it be our brethren? was anxiously inquired by every one; and indeed it was. Poor fellows! they had tasted nothing for more than twenty-four hours. At the time when they disappeared they were overwhelmed in the belly

of a tremendous broken sea, and their boat was nearly filled. Their little mast was carried away, and one of them was washed overboard, but catching hold of the boat, they had hauled him in again. By extraordinary exertions they then bailed their boat, got their mast replaced, and, pursuing our course, in their anxiety to overtake us, had actually passed us before daylight. How we ever met again was a mystery to all; but "it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous in our eyes." I shall not attempt to describe the scene of our remarkable greeting. It was not joyous, for alas, we had now become strangers to every emotion of gladness; but we grasped each other's hands, and our full hearts found vent in silent tears. Our souls had become knit together in the fellowship of suffering, and in the midst of deaths, we celebrated their restoration as a deliverance from the grave. Of course they received immediate refreshment and a little wine was distributed to the whole company on the occasion. Our noontide worship, which was

mutually conducted, arose from overflowing hearts ; and although our common woes were nothing abated, we caught something of the spirit of our hymn while we sung,

Let troubles rise, and terrors frown,
And days of darkness fall,
Through Him all dangers we'll defy,
And more than conquer all.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORLORN LANDING.

“They are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet.”

So soon as our heartfelt congratulations had blended and been breathed out in prayer, hope became faintly rekindled in each yet conscious bosom of our distressed company ; and with all our lingering energies of life, we made for the yet invisible shore. “The wrath of God lay hard upon us,” and, for so many days “we had been afflicted with all his waves, that we felt as if all safety consisted only in escape from ocean’s “deeps.” And yet I was not without apprehension, that what we so fondly anticipated as the occasion

of deliverance, might prove the fatal scene of our doom. The imminent danger of approaching a comparatively unknown coast, especially amid the heavy roll of Cape seas, and in such small boats as ours, demanded the exercise of every possible precaution, and suggested forebodings of no very pleasing issue. By my calculations we had been driven to the north of St. Helena Bay, which, by its bend, gave us forty miles more of sea to traverse than if we had been able to keep a more southerly course. On consulting a small fragment of chart—which one of the ladies had preserved for us, from the action of the sea, in her bosom,—I found, to our great relief, that the coast for which we were making was free of any outside shoals, and appeared favourable for our landing. We therefore made all speed to reach the shore if possible before nightfall; in this, however, we were disappointed; and a dense fog ahead hid the object of our solicitude from view, until night descended, and shrouded the surrounding landscape in darkness. The weath-

er being moderate I resolved to prosecute our course throughout the night, and endeavour to effect our landing at daylight. The evening proved intensely cold, and we endured more acute suffering from the wind and spray, during those hours of darkness, than we had ever done before. This was probably caused by our preserving a more southerly course, and keeping the sheet hauled aft, which exposed us to the action of the sea, and sent the wind right down on us from the sail. Ere morning came a cold shiver had consequently seized every frame, and several persons in both boats were quite unable to stir.

About five o'clock the skiff hailed us, and communicated the melancholy tidings that the lad John Chisholm was dead. This was the first breach made among us, and it fell among our wasting company like a forerunner of our own fate. We were all closely "round the grave's devouring mouth," and now that it had found its first victim, we felt assured that others would follow. George

Peat, in our boat, was only in life, and several persons in both boats were visibly sinking fast into the same unconscious state. I felt this visitation bitterly, as I was in full hope of reaching land in a few hours, and was sustained—by the signal mercy hitherto enjoyed—in the pleasing expectation that “God would have given us the lives of all who sailed with us.” But “He who doeth according to his will” had deemed it otherwise, and our hearts smote us to think that we had been preserved amid many perils, possibly only to perish on the threshold of deliverance.

Visions of land floated before our aching and anxious gaze throughout that weary night, and often we supposed that we could detect the dim outline of the headlands between the sea and sky. Still we trembled in uncertainty until morning came; but when the sun arose, it looked down upon us from behind the African hills, which stood in distinct outline before us at the distance of twelve miles. Then every heart bounded with hope, and the fading energies of life re-

vived within us. We greeted the glad spectacle with our morning incense, and poured out our thanksgiving to God our Ebenezer. There was a beautiful propriety in the subject of our song; which then rose on the morning air, from the margin of that mighty ocean. It was Psalm xlv.,

“God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid;
Therefore although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid.

Though hills amidst the seas be cast,
Though waters roaring make
And troubled be; yea, *though the hill*
By swelling seas do shake.”

Scarcely had these sublime words passed our lips, ere we felt the awful importance and value of the holy sentiment. Our eyes could now detect a long line of frowning and iron-bound coast, fringed only with foam, and hoary with tremendous breakers. No friendly opening was visible, along that fearful barrier, and we looked in vain for some quiet

creek amid the strife, where ocean might peacefully surrender the helpless charge which longed for escape from its horrors. As if to increase the solemnity of our condition, the wind at this time began to rise, and a heavy ground swell rolled in from the south-west, so that it needed no ordinary faith to prepare with calmness for the approaching crisis. But our only course was to face the danger, and trust to God for deliverance. I sent the small boat ahead, to examine the coast, if possible to find a creek for convenient landing, it being lighter than our boat, and having thafsts for easy rowing, which we had not. I then sought to rally the spirits of my crew by a little exertion; getting out the oars, I exhorted them to try the exercise of rowing a little, and took a spell myself. With great difficulty I succeeded in inducing the most of them to make the attempt, and we felt the benefit of the effort, in a freer circulation of our blood, which served to relax our stiffened joints, and relieved us of the cold shivering.

The breeze continued strong, and the sea was very heavy, until we approached within half a mile of the shore; when God—as if in sympathy with our situation, and preparing our way—subdued the wind, and made the strife of waters partially to subside. This gracious interposition made a deep impression upon us all, and we felt animated by it, in our very critical circumstances, as a foretaste of deliverance. At this time, a small rock which appeared to windward, presented to our eager eyes for a season the likeness of a sail; and we were delighted for the moment with the idea, that the coast which we were approaching might be inhabited; but a nearer view soon dispelled the illusion, and left us to a scene only of wild and desert solitude. Our small boat had now gone close in with the shore, in search of a landing-place, while we remained at a short distance on the outside, to wait for instructions. Our companions, in their eagerness to execute their survey, had unfortunately got themselves embayed, and in attempting to weather a projecting

point, they failed ; so that, in their extremity, one course only remained to them—for life or death they had to run for the beach. We, seeing this sudden movement, and supposing that our friends had discovered a favourable landing-place, bore up, and followed closely in their track. By signs and cries they attempted to warn us off ; but we, mistaking their signals for encouragement, only pursued with increasing speed. It was a moment of intense and trembling interest to us all ; death or deliverance hung upon the instant, and our hearts were fully alive to the immediate and awful alternative. Every faded and haggard countenance became flushed with eager excitement ; every eye was strained to watch on either hand the impending fate ; every hand grasped the gunwale with convulsive and trembling energy, and we held our breath in awe, as we dashed among the breakers, and plunged amid those fearful rocks and shoals. Surely the eye of heaven was watching over us in that unchosen and accidental landing-scene ; for amidst many

perils, it presented favourable opportunities for us—in a narrow channel among a cluster of small rocks, which was crowned with a sand beach—that no human foresight could have detected, and that was rare on that coast. Our small boat, indeed, was in extreme jeopardy; for in the midst of the breakers it struck upon a sharp rock, and some of the crew were thrown overboard by the shock. The sail, however, being still set, the next wave lifted it over, and the wind and sea being dead in shore, drove them right up to the beach, where, amid many difficulties, they effected a landing, and rescued their comrades in a state of great exhaustion. We in the larger boat were somewhat more fortunate; for “by the good hand of God upon us,” we made our way safely through a narrow channel, among the small rocks, without touching, until we came within a boat’s length of the beach, where we stuck fast upon a rock. There being deep water between us and the shore, we were all plunged overhead in our attempts to escape; but the ladies and chil-

dren being assisted by the mate and seamen, were soon placed in safety ; and “ so it came to pass, that we escaped all safe to land.”

This signal deliverance—alike so gracious and remarkable—revealed in all its course and accomplishment, the direct and immediate agency of God, and could be attributed solely to his marked interposition and care. No human foresight or management could have availed to preserve so helpless a company in such extremities. With boats so frail, and means of sustenance so slender, nothing less than Omnipotent kindness could have sustained us throughout a voyage so disproportionate to all our preparations, and so encompassed with exceeding dangers. If our course, indeed, revealed no miracles, it was at least replete with special mercies ; for had we been visited by a few days of head winds, or been overtaken by any of the fearful squalls so common in Cape seas, or even made our landfall on a bold and unbroken coast, not one of us would have survived in such a case to tell the tale of our disasters,

and our last struggles would have been hid in the dark and terrible secrets of ocean, which, like the grave, gives no revelations. We had been led to look to God in all our way: even the good order and discipline which had been maintained, we felt we owed to his grace; and while we had used our best endeavours for our preservation, yet without his blessing, we were conscious that every exertion must have been without avail. Therefore, when God had "been better to us than our fears," and "redeemed our lives from destruction," our utmost gratitude was due to him, and we invite men "to see his hand," and "to praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

If it had been possible, at that solemn hour, to have forgotten or overlooked the signal kindness of heaven, even the continuous manifestations of Divine goodness to us must have, on the instant, rebuked such base ingratitude. Scarcely had the feet of our forlorn company been permitted to touch the

shore, when the storm, which had lulled previously to our landing, burst forth with redoubled fury, and raged without intermission during the whole time that we remained in that place. The sea arose in ungovernable wrath, and as it lashed the shore, lifted our little boats upon its billows to a height of forty or fifty feet upon the beach. The narrow channel through which we had reached the shore in safety instantly became one scene of boiling surge, which would have shattered to pieces the proudest bark, and engulfed every living thing on board of her. Who could fail to discover the striking proof of a special and gracious Providence in this occurrence? If it be said that such sudden storms frequently occur in these latitudes, still the question arises,—why did that storm come at the precise moment when we were immediately out of the reach of its fury? There can be but one answer to this inquiry,—it was the good pleasure of him “who gave to the sea its decree, that it cannot pass, and who compasseth its waters with bounds.

Our company stood awe-stricken at the sight. We looked back upon the scene of destruction, from which we had so recently escaped, with mingled feelings of dismay and gratitude. Our deliverance, indeed, was not yet complete. Alas! who could tell whether,—“having escaped the sea,—vengeance might yet suffer us to live?” “The perils of the wilderness” lay before us in all their unknown horrors of toil, and thirst, and frightful famine. Still we had been delivered from “the floods that affrighted us,”—our bosoms swelled with the full sense of our rescue, and while we raised our song of deliverance and poured out our grateful prayers to God, there were many devout hearts in our circle who could appropriate the sentiment of the poet:—

Thus far on life's perplexing path,
Thus far the Lord our steps hath led;
Safe from the *flame's* pursuing wrath,
Unharm'd though *floods* hung o'er our head.
Here let us pause—look back—adore,
Like ransom'd Israel from the shore.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MELANCHOLY MARCH THROUGH THE
WILDERNESS.

“They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.”

THE first view of our solitary landing-place revealed to us a wild and barren region. Neither traces of cultivation, nor marks of human abode, nor even tracks of living creature, met our eye in all the adjacent landscape; and my heart misgave me at the prospect, lest we had only exchanged the scene of our miseries, but not escaped from them. The idea of delay in obtaining succours was too painful to indulge, for every hour only added to the horrors of our situation.

Our scanty supplies were rapidly wasting away, and the strength of the people was already well nigh spent by fatigue and famine. I dared not to anticipate the consequences of even a short continuance of such a state of things, and felt that our utmost efforts must be directed to urgent measures for immediate deliverance.

Meanwhile, every arrangement was made for present exigencies. A small refreshment was distributed immediately after landing, and our weary men set about the erection of tents, which were soon reared, by lashing a few spars together and overlaying them with sails and blankets. This shelter was peculiarly seasonable to persons, who, for nine days and nights had not known the luxury of lying down, or resting their exhausted frames; especially as an African sun was blazing in noon-tide brilliancy, and with insufferable fierceness over our heads. Our wasted people soon betook themselves to repose and I was pleased to find that the greater number of them were soon lost in

sweet forgetfulness of all their woes. As for myself, sleep had so long been a stranger to my aching frame, that it refused at first to revisit me, and my mind was too anxiously concerned for the future to court its present approach. So soon, therefore, as I found the others asleep, Mr. Wallace the mate, and I—who had lain down together, and were alike wakeful—rose up and went forth to consult as to our future course of proceeding. We were agreed in thinking that the parched and desolate appearance of the place gave little hope of finding water, or of obtaining relief; and that our whole and instant efforts must be directed to discover succours by sea or land. Two courses only presented themselves: the first, which was to re-enter the boats, and endeavour to reach the Cape colony by sea, was plainly impracticable from the severity of the weather; the sea at that moment being visible below us in its wildest majesty, as it thundered its mountainous billows against the base of the rocks, and scattered its angry foam over the cliffs to a hun-

dred and twenty feet above its bed. Besides, we were conscious that even in calmest weather, our company could not possibly survive for twenty-four hours, under a renewed exposure and crowding in the boats, without a fresh supply of water and provisions. We were shut up, therefore, to the only available alternative of seeking succour by a land journey, and by keeping a southerly course in the direction of the Cape, we hoped that we might soon reach some human habitation. I proposed that we should remain till the expiry of the following day, in order to recruit our people for the journey, and to complete the necessary preparations for our departure. Meanwhile a search could be made for water, and I would endeavour to obtain an observation at noon, in order to certify our exact latitude, and ascertain our distance from the Cape. This course was afterwards submitted to the whole company, and as it met their approval, it was adopted.

We had carried George Peat ashore from the boat in a dying state. Every thing was

done for his comfort which our circumstances would permit, but the poor lad was beyond the reach of relief. He lingered in painful unconsciousness till the following morning, when he died. The body of John Chisholm was also brought on shore in the skiff, and covered with the Union Jack, until we had leisure to dig a grave. The two youths were respectfully buried on the successive afternoons, divine service being performed at their interment. They lie side by side on that desert shore where they met their fate, and their pilgrimage ceased,—where no footstep of friendship shall ever trace the unknown scene of their last repose, and only the murmurs of ocean disturb its solitary stillness.

After evening service had been conducted in the tent, we kindled a fire to preserve us from any attacks of wild beasts, and committed ourselves to rest. I enjoyed a few hours of sweet sleep that evening, for the first time after my long watching, and awoke considerably refreshed and invigorated. By four o'clock in the morning our whole party were

astir, and went off in detachments at daylight, to search for water; but after wandering for two hours, in survey of all the surrounding coast, they returned, as we feared, dispirited and unsuccessful. A vegetable was found in great abundance which was full of sap, but on tasting it we discovered that it was saturated with salt, and unfit for use. The only supply which the region afforded was shell-fish, which for the same reason, with our scanty allowance of water, could only be sparingly used. The situation of our tent in the low grounds was now found to be insufferable on account of the intense heat, so that I proposed to shift it to the rising ground behind, in order to obtain a freer circulation of air. But our people were so feeble as to be unfit for the exertion, and it was only after great labour, and by bribing them with a tea-spoonful of wine, that this measure of relief was accomplished. The ladies meanwhile were employed, in preparations for our journey of the following day, by making canvass bags to hold our provisions;

and the precious remainder of water was emptied from the cask into bottles and jars, so as to be easy of carriage on the road. I could only get an overhead observation for the latitude at noon, in consequence of the sun being over the land. My calculation agreed with my previous conjecture, that we were north of the Oliphant (or Elephant's) River, about eleven miles; but as Norie's Epitome, which was my only book of reference snatched from the burning ship, gave me no example for working such an altitude, I could not certify the accuracy of the reckoning. However, my repeated trials convinced me that I could not be more than a mile or two from the truth, and we determined, therefore, to start in that direction on the morrow, in the hope of finding some settlement on the river's banks.

Our preparations for departure being completed, we lay down to sleep, under the same precautions as on the previous night, and were aroused at four o'clock to pursue our journey. Previous to starting, I distributed

among the ladies and cabin passengers, so far as they would go, seven of my white shirts to serve as change of linen, they having been discovered in the boat on our landing. We had at this time six days' allowance of water, at the rate of three bottles a day to our twenty-six persons, or scarcely three table-spoonfuls to each, which, in our already fevered and maddening thirst, and under a broiling tropical sun, was not nearly sufficient to sustain life. A small surplus, however, was found in the water-cask after all our bottles were filled, which was distributed among the company, and served to refresh us at departure. We broke some oars for carrying-poles, and distributed the stores among the responsible persons in the company, with strict injunctions that they should restrict themselves to the general allowance, as any breach of fidelity might sacrifice the lives of the whole party. After the celebration of divine worship, in which we committed our way to God, we set out on our melancholy journey. Our road lay before us through "a

waste howling wilderness," and we "went out, not knowing whither we went;" but our trust was in that God, "who had found Israel in a desert land, and kept him as the apple of his eye," and we hoped that he would lead us also forth "by a right way, that we might go to a place of habitation."

Our company presented a most wretched appearance in the march, and we soon proved ourselves to be indeed miserable travellers. Our limbs had swelled to an inordinate size in consequence of our confinement and exposure in the boats, and they were so stiffened with inactivity as only to be dragged along with difficulty. The ground over which we toiled our way was unfavourable for progress in our faint condition, being, for the most part, loose and sandy, and occasionally tangled with small shrubs: and as we went our way, struggling, and staggering beneath our light loads, we bore a striking resemblance to the last remnant of a famished garrison, or the latest fugitive survivors of a siege. We accomplished about a mile, when

we sat down to rest, and stripped ourselves of all our upper clothing, on account of the oppressive heat. After a short pause we again resumed our journey, and with great difficulty reached a similar distance. It was only after much persuasion that I induced them again to stir; but there was no shelter in the place from the fierce rays of the sun; and I was extremely anxious, in our desperate circumstances, which were every moment growing darker, to make all the progress possible. About noon we discovered two huts under the cliff, and were of course anxious to reach them; but they were inaccessible to us, in our weak condition. We halloed, however, with all our might, to find if they had any inmates; but as "there was no voice that answered, neither any that regarded," we justly concluded that they were uninhabited, and could furnish no relief to us, so that we turned mournfully away, and pursued our journey. I afterwards learned that these huts belonged to a fishing company, and were deserted; a few casks of water were kept there, for the supply of their

vessels, but these were kept under ground, so that we would have found no relief by visiting the place, and most probably would have perished in the attempt. Soon after we likewise descried traces of a path which led into the interior, which some of our people were inclined to follow ; but I dissuaded them from the attempt, as the coast was the coolest region, as well as the most likely to lead us to water ; whereas we might only wander in the wilderness to die the most horrid death. We accomplished altogether about six miles by this day's journey, and halted at last, in utter exhaustion, on a promontory, where we were exposed to the sea breeze.

On collecting our party, to overhaul our stock, I found that one of the cabin passengers, who had been quite delirious for some days, having fallen behind us on the day's march, on account of weakness, had cast away his coat, containing two bottles of water, from anxiety to overtake his party. Every search was made for this lost treasure and valuable supply, but to no purpose. To

add to the misfortune, another cabin passenger, from whose education I might have expected better conduct, alone, of all the people, proved himself unworthy of trust. Of the two bottles committed to his charge, one was found empty. He had stolen from his party during the day, under pretence of tracking the path into the interior, and the temptation proving too strong for him, he had consumed a whole bottle for his own use. This I concealed from our people, for I am certain that, if they had known it, they would have taken his life on the spot. But I was deeply grieved to find that a whole day's supply of this scarce and vital commodity had been lost to us through the imbecility and profligacy of our companions. To prevent the recurrence of such a calamity, which would have endangered the lives of all of us, I put the water, henceforth, under the charge of my confidential seamen; and after our evening's repast and prayers, we betook ourselves to sleep.

During night a heavy dew fell, mingled with a few drops of rain, which roused us

from our slumbers, and our people commenced greedily to suck the moisture from the blankets; but they having been soaked by sea water, and only dried in the sun, were so impregnated with salt that we soon desisted from an endeavour which brought us no relief. As morning dawned our pleasing expectation of rain departed, and with heavy hearts we prepared to pursue our course. The condition of our people at this time was extremely distressing, their faces had become bloated and disfigured, and their lips were rent and chapped, while the painful swelling in the arms and legs was rapidly on the increase, so that I apprehended some of them would not be able to hold on till night. I sought to rally their downcast spirits, by feigning a cheerfulness which I did not feel, and pointing to some mountains in the south-east, I prompted them to proceed, by assuring them, that wherever mountains appeared, water was always to be found. I was certain, moreover, by the calculations which I had made, that we could not be more than five

miles from Oliphant River, where I felt assured that relief would be afforded. We made indeed most wretched progress in that morning's journey ; ere three quarters of a mile had been accomplished, we were compelled to halt, and after receiving our allowance and singing a hymn, we proceeded on our way. Scarcely another mile had been overtaken ere we were again forced to rest ourselves, and here I felt alarmed lest some of the company should never be able to resume the march. The old gentleman, who had lost his coat on the previous day, was especially overcome ; he seemed so thoroughly exhausted in spirit, and so worn out in frame—being covered over with sores in face and limbs—that it seemed impossible to rouse him to any further effort, and others were inclined, with him, to resign themselves to despair. I was greatly perplexed how to act in this extremity. I could not bear to leave the wretched alone to die ; and to detain the others on their account, would be certain destruction to us all. In this painful crisis I

secretly sought direction from God, and had resolved to remain with the desperate, leaving the others to press on, and send back for us if they should find succour. This purpose I only communicated to my brother William, and urged him to use every exertion to reach a place of safety, and in case of my death, to be kind to my dear wife and family. He, however, sternly refused to accede to my wishes, and declared his resolution, if I persisted, to abide and die with me. By his persuasion I was shaken in my purpose, and by dint of great exertion, we managed to assist our invalids on through another stage.

On looking out for our next halting-place, I observed a rising ground a little in advance of us, and urged our people to reach it ere they rested. This was done, because I thought something like the entrance of a river appeared beyond, and I was resolved to ascertain the fact by crowning the hill. We had nearly reached the place, when the mate, who was a little in advance, cried out, "There is the river." I ran forward at the

transporting tidings, and by advancing a few paces, a scene of overpowering interest burst upon my view. Not only was the river distinctly visible as it rolled its broad waters through a fertile valley, until they mingled with ocean at our feet; but I could also distinctly descry a settlement, with its dwelling-houses and offices, on the opposite bank. Never did scene more sweet open upon human vision, than met my ecstatic gaze in that landscape. I had no eye—no heart for its natural beauties; but thoughts of life and of rescue arose within me in that glance. It seemed to me an opening paradise: visions of home—of happiness—rushed back upon my desolate soul. The tide of sorrow, in a heart ready to perish, was turned within me, and joy rose in such sudden revulsion from recent wretchedness, that I was completely overpowered. The same excess of emotion filled every heart that now crowded around at the tidings. We grasped each other's hands in convulsive silence; our hearts were too full for utterance, and, for a considerable

time, tears were the only expression that came from our overcharged bosoms. Rapture was in our glance when we saw human beings moving about on the opposite bank, and we became rivetted in delighted gaze upon the neat white-washed house, with its clear blue smoke curling up into the sky, and all the accompaniments of European comfort around it. I was the first to break the interesting silence, by saying, "Now, my dear friends, the Lord has led us by a way that we knew not, to a land inhabited." We then gave thanks to God, who had done so great things for us, and we served out a little of our remaining stock of water. As we were still a mile from the river, I preserved a small portion, in case the river water should prove salt, which, on reaching it, we found to be the case. We had carried our English ensign as a signal in case of meeting any vessel, and now, by tying two broken oars together, we elevated it to attract the notice of the persons on the opposite bank. They evidently had descried us; for we observed a

boat push off from the shore, and advance straight toward us across the stream. This was to us a gracious token that the season of succour was at hand. We immediately thereupon drank off our last remaining bottle of water, and prepared to greet our deliverers. The moment of our rescue was especially interesting and solemn. While the boat approached, we all joined hands and united in singing the 23d Psalm, and, as the faint concert arose from our famished group, it seemed, to our overflowing hearts, to ascend to heaven, alike as the devout dirge of our departing sorrows, and the joyous anthem of our coming deliverance.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESCUE.

“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.”

THE boat, which seemed to our view like a messenger of mercy, approached within hail, when, with due precaution, it halted, and to our delightful surprise a voice in the English language demanded to know who we were, and what was our business. We immediately declared our doleful story, when the party landed without farther ceremony, and told us that we had come among a Christian people. The meeting was most affecting on either side; it was with difficulty that our people, in the ecstasy of rescue, could refrain from falling down at the feet of their

deliverers ; and the strangers, as they surveyed our emaciated and wretched company, were quite unable to suppress their tears. Our first appeal to them was for water, and they communicated the joyful intelligence to us, that there was an excellent fountain on the other side, where our wants would be abundantly supplied. I immediately embarked, in company with the ladies, and by three successive trips, the whole of our people were safely landed on the other side, where we were all received with unbounded affection and hospitality. We instantly repaired, with incontrollable avidity, to the fountain, where we sought to satiate our maddening thirst by deep and frequent draughts, until we had gorged ourselves with the exquisite supply, and felt life reflow in cooler currents through our parched and fevered frames. A princely meal was also provided for us on the instant, consisting of a whole sheep, and part of a wild buck, which had been shot on the farm in the morning ; but our hearts were too full to possess a keen appetite, and we could only

taste of the bounteous provision amid many tears, when we contrasted the scantiness and misery of our morning repast with our present profusion, and the hearts of many of us rose in silent gratitude to "God, who had done so great things for us, whereof we were glad."

We found that the settlement which we had reached belonged to a warm-hearted Dutch farmer, named Mynheer Low, of whose unbounded generosity and kindness it is impossible for me to speak in excessive terms. His family consisted of an amiable wife and daughter, who shared in all his own benevolence, and loaded us with attentions, which can never be forgotten, and it would be impossible to repay.

The Englishman, who had accompanied our host in the boat which ferried us over the river, and who acted as our interpreter during our stay, was a sailor belonging to a whale and seal fishing company. He had been left by his employers, in company with another person, to reside during the fishing season, on a neighbouring island, in order to preserve

the fishing grounds, which were rented from the colonial government. He and his partner were obliged to visit the settlement very frequently for supplies of water, which they required to keep, alike for their own use, and in case of their schooner running short during her voyage. I learned from this person that the coast to the north of Oliphant River is entirely destitute of water, and without inhabitants; and I mention this in case any persons who peruse this narrative should be driven on this coast, that they may know where to obtain succour. Mr. Low's farm is situated on the south bank of the Oliphant River, about four miles from the sea, and two hundred miles from the Cape of Good Hope.

Soon after our arrival I communicated with Mr. Low as to the necessary provision for our future accommodation. It was impossible with his limited resources, that he could lodge and sustain twenty-six persons for many days; and it was plain from the distressing condition of our people, that they would require several days of careful nursing and

rest, before they could bear removal by land journey.

Having learned that an English gentleman kept a store at Donkin's Bay, twenty-four miles distant, I immediately despatched a messenger to solicit his assistance. This person, whose name was Mr. R. Fryer, proved to us to be indeed "a brother born for adversity." No language can adequately express his unremitting kindness and unceasing exertions for our welfare, and for which he would never listen to any proposals of remuneration whatever. He came down on horseback immediately on receiving notice of our condition, and despatched a message to the nearest field cornet, to make provision for our succour. On his arrival he proposed to take the ladies at once to his house, they being the only parties fit to be removed. It may seem strange that the most delicate members of our company should have borne the hardships of our situation with greater hardihood than men of robust frame; and yet it was remarkable throughout the whole of our af-

fictions, that the ladies and even the children bore the sufferings with the greatest magnanimity, and discovered a spirit of patient endurance which might have put to shame the hardiest men. It is thus that God sometimes, as of old, "out of weakness maketh strong," and causeth "things that are not to be as though they were, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

In accordance with this arrangement, our ladies set off in a waggon for Mr. Fryer's house, under charge of our host's daughter, on the evening after our arrival at Oliphant River; and in twenty-four hours, the waggon returned loaded with provisions, luxuries and medicines. Mr. Fryer also sent four sheep on the same day, and gave his shepherd orders to supply us with as many as we wanted; and yet these things were but a tithe of the kindness which we received at the hands of this good Samaritan.

We were at this time also under great obligations to Mr. Francis J. Troutar, who had come down the river at this time, along with

his mother-in-law and a few servants, to fish. The good old lady took our three children to her hut, supplied them with frocks and under-clothing, and treated them with the solicitude and kindness of a mother, so as to merit our warmest gratitude.

In the course of a few days, the effects of our long fasting and exposure and fatigues began to appear, and to make shocking havoc on the persons of our people, in loathsome bloaches on the face, and excessive swelling of the arms and legs. The steward was particularly in a pitiable condition with his face, and one of the cabin passengers was confined to his couch. One of his legs burst, and his hand was obliged to be laid open by a deep incision of a razor, so that I was afraid at one time, that he would not rally. In the course, however, of four or five days, through the unremitting nursing of the Dutchman's family, and by the kind providence of God, we all began to amend. Our recovery soon revealed itself in an incessant craving for food ; for some days it was almost impossible

to satisfy our intense appetite, and we were in danger of creating a famine in the Dutchman's settlement, as a sheep was killed every day for our use, and we consumed great quantities of wheat, which we prepared for boiling by pounding it in a mortar, and sometimes made into bread after grinding it in a hand-mill.

On the 13th January I received a letter from Mr. Rennyfield, civil commissioner, Clan William, to meet him at Mr. Fryer's on the following day, in company with Mr. Troutar. We accordingly set off next morning, at five o'clock, and as I was but an indifferent horseman, I was greatly exhausted by the ride. The country in this quarter is chiefly sandy, and blows with the wind like dust, but it is thickly studded with sundry kinds of shrubs and bushes, which are valuable for the feeding of cattle and sheep. On reaching my destination, I was most hospitably received by Mr. Fryer, and his lady, and was happy to find my lady passengers in good health and spirits. The civil commissioner made full

arrangements with me for our journey to Cape Town. I received a letter to produce to each field cornet on the route, containing instructions to provide us with waggons, and to supply us with every necessary on the road. Mr. Troutar, who was the field cornet of the district, was to provide the waggons and to be our conductor through the first stage; and our departure was arranged for the 19th of January, by which time it was hoped that our invalids would be so far recovered as to bear the journey.

On the day appointed we prepared for our departure amidst much bustle and confusion. The yoking of fourteen or sixteen oxen in a waggon is like getting an East India trader under weigh, and the chattering of the Hottentots in the excitement of the occasion was quite amusing. The scene of separation with our dear friends and deliverers was exquisitely affecting. The kind Dutchman's family were weeping aloud; Mr. Troutar's mother-in-law clung to our little orphan family, and refused to part with them; even

the Hottentots could not refrain their tears. I confess that I never felt myself so unmaned in my life, and it was only after an hour had been wasted in ineffectual efforts to say farewell, that by a desperate resolution we at last tore ourselves away. They followed us for a short distance, and then stood, and waved their hands as long as we could see them. Thus we parted from kind strangers, who had entwined themselves around our hearts in fondest endearments ; and while memory holds her seat in our bosoms, I trust that we shall never cease to pray for richest blessings on the heads of our benevolent friends of the Oliphant River.

We reached Mr. Fryer's at Donkin's Bay about midnight, where our party was rejoined by the ladies, and we remained in the enjoyment of this excellent family's hospitality until the next afternoon. Another painful scene of leave-taking had here to be repeated, and it was with difficulty that our ladies could command themselves in parting, from one who had proved so lavish in his generosity

to all of us in our distress. "May the Lord reward him," and "think upon him for good," according to all the kindness that he showed unto us.

It would be tedious to enter into minute details of our land journey to the Cape. It presented all the usual adventures of that tedious mode of travel;—sometimes ploughing sandy deserts deep to the axles,—and occasionally land-locked by an interminable maze of tangled brushwood. Frequently we lost our path in the darkness, the over-laboured brutes were many times at a stand-still from exhaustion, and scarcity of water; and once or twice, we had nearly suffered a second *shipwreck in the desert*, to the great alarm of the ladies, and not without the hazard of broken bones.

Mr. Troutar accompanied us with his waggon and cattle, through several dreary stages, until we reached Mr. Vanzells' farm. This gentleman was uncle to our worthy conductor, and also a field cornet. Here we obtained fresh cattle, and started under a new convoy.

It was with extreme regret that we parted from Mr. Troutar, whose kind and gentlemanly deportment had endeared him to us all. I was also compelled to leave Mr. Harris our cabin passenger here, under charge of our surgeon, as he was so ill as to be unable to proceed; Mr. Vanzells promising to forward both gentlemen to Cape Town on horseback, so soon as Mr. Harris was able to bear the journey. After travelling by uneasy stages for several days, we crossed the Peak Berg range of mountains, the Boers throughout treating us with unvarying kindness, and we furnishing much amusement to the inquisitive and simple people, by the strangeness of our dress, and speech, and psalmody.

At length on the 28th January at midnight, we entered Cape Town, fatigued with our journeyings in the wilderness, and happy in being able once more to mingle in the society of our countrymen. The luxury of a good bed, which for the first time I had here enjoyed, since leaving the ship, could not induce me to sleep. The whole scene of dangers

and deliverances, through which the Lord had led us, here rose vividly before my view, and I could not refrain from giving fervent thanks to Him, "who had not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." He had indeed "chastened us sore, but he had not given us over to death;" and we could adopt the language of the Psalmist, "'Thou, who hast showed us great and sore troubles, shalt quicken us again, and bring us again from the depths of the earth.'" "So will we sing praises unto thy name for ever."

Immediately after breakfast, on the morning of the 29th January, I waited on Colonel Bell, at that time Deputy-Governor of the Cape, and represented to him the miserable condition in which my crew and passengers were. He immediately sent for one of his officers to accompany me to our lodgings, and to make arrangements for the payment of our board. Being in miserable plight for want of clothing, I was at this time greatly indebted to Captain Christie of London, who

presented me with an excellent suit of his own. I had the pleasure, also, of meeting an excellent friend in Dr. Brown (belonging originally to my native town of Peterhead), who took me to his own house, and entertained me most hospitably during my stay at the Cape. Meanwhile, the merchants and gentlemen of the place opened a public subscription on our behalf, which was handsomely headed by Colonel Bell, and soon amounted to the sum of £120. By this money, a sum equal to a month's wages, was distributed in clothing to each of the crew, and the passengers received a similar supply, in equitable proportions,—the three children being fully furnished with all necessities for the continuance of their voyage, and the ladies being supplied with clothing and a little money. I also received £10 of this money, along with a letter of commendation, and I am thus minute in detailing the benevolence of the people of Cape Colony, as it is deserving alike of personal gratitude and public praise.

Every effort was now made to forward the passengers to their destinations, and to dispose of the crew by drafting them into different ships. After a little exertion, this was happily accomplished on behalf of all, with the exception of two steerage passengers, who preferred to accept of situations in the colony. So soon as I had thus discharged my obligations to the people under my care, I began to think how to dispose of myself. After various friendly offers of employment, none of which exactly suited me, I finally accepted of a passage home in a London schooner belonging to Mr. Fletcher, and bound to Bristol. My kind friends in Cape Town affectionately accompanied me to the ship, and, after taking grateful leave of them, our vessel set sail for England, and in due season, "by the good hand of my God upon me," I returned in peace to the bosom of my wife and family.

Thus terminated a voyage replete with judgment and mercies. In the review of its "affliction and misery—the wormwood and

the gall—my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me.” And “may my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,” if I forget that “God who answered us in the day of our distress, and was with us in the way in which we went.” I trust also that the same spirit and resolution may abide upon all the survivors of that disastrous voyage which appeared in the day of our calamity. Even the most indifferent in religious things there owned that it was “a good thing to call upon God,” and poured out a prayer when his chastening hand was upon them.” May it never be said of any of us that “we flattered him with our mouth, and lied unto him with our tongues,” or that “we forgot God and remembered not his wonders.” The solemn professions which we then made are still before his throne, and He will never forget, however we may, the extraordinary obligations under which we lie, to dedicate our spared lives to His service. O that we may every day perform the vows which “our

lipsuttered—our mouths spake when trouble was upon us ;” and that our future lives may realize the holy resolution of the man of God : “Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling ; therefore I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

And surely this simple tribute to Divine goodness carries with it a solemn message to every reader’s heart. How impressively does it declare *uncertainty of life, even in moments of greatest seeming security*. It was when least expecting it, that the foregoing calamities came. And who can tell how soon God may disturb our dreams of security, by the summons to the judgment seat ? “We stand in jeopardy every hour.” In a world so full of sorrow and evil, we are daily exposed to the visitation of death. And does it not become us, in such circumstances, “to be always ready—to have our loins girt, and our lamps burning, and be like men that wait for the coming of the Lord ?” O that we were wise—that we understood this, that we would

consider our latter end." Sailors, above most men, ought especially to cultivate this spirit of habitual preparedness. Their calling pre-eminently exposes them to peril, and they are found "in deaths oft." The breeze that fills their sails, and wafts them to their destination, may swell into tempest, and become "the breath of the blast of Jehovah's nostrils" for their destruction. The ocean that spreads around them a peaceful pathway to distant lands, may heave into huge and hoary billows, that yawn only to engulf them in its horrid grave. The very shore that greets them with gladness after long absence, may be changed into a scene of fatal shipwreck, and death find them at the very door of supposed deliverance. Who does not feel as he treads the deck of his gallant vessel, that death is lurking near him in every element that lies over, and around, and underneath his feet; and that God is proclaiming, at every moment, in all the voice of nature, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, *there is but a step between thee and death.*"

And can we be safe, in such circumstances, to live in unpreparedness for that which may meet us the next moment, and must meet us ere long? Or ought we to feel satisfied, in any circumstances, if we be living in a state of enmity with God? What can the sinner do, and whither shall he flee, when judgments overtake him? He cannot look up to a neglected and angry God; he dare not look down upon an undone eternity; nothing remains for him but “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation to destroy him as an adversary.” Why, oh why, should we live in such a state of defenceless danger—exposed at every accident to the destroying vengeance of heaven? Is not a divine Saviour now offering us not only his protection, but also his propitiation? The merit of his sacrifice is able to screen all who confide in it, not only from temporal danger, but also from eternal destruction. Let us seek our present safety, in acceptance with God, through the blood of Immanuel; and we shall find our security from all future evils in

the covert of his covenant. Then, "though we walk in the midst of trouble his right hand will save us," and we shall face every danger with a fearless confidence, while we can exclaim—"The Lord of Hosts is on our side, the God of Jacob is our refuge." For Immanuel shall be "an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

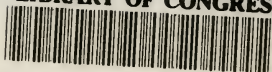
If any truth be confirmed by the foregoing narrative, it is the truth of God's word, that "the Lord is good—a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him." The "profiting" of prayer in such a case must "be apparent to all." It was the smallest part of its advantages that it preserved order, and prevented excess,—that it filled the fainting hearts of the crew and passengers with courage, and renewed their strength when they were sinking fast into despair. It did more; their eyes turned heavenward in their helplessness, and they found a power superior to their own, interpose for their deli-

verance. These poor men cried, and *the Lord heard them*, and delivered them out of all their distresses." If any reader should doubt the truth of this conclusion, or deny it, let him go and "prove God," by the same means; let him "in everything by prayer and supplication make known his request to God;" and if his prayer be sincere the gracious answer will be certain; his own experience will but accord with the infallible testimony of all ages. "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." "FOR THIS SHALL EVERY ONE THAT IS GODLY PRAY UNTO THEE IN A TIME WHEN THOU MAYEST BE FOUND; SURELY IN THE FLOODS OF GREAT WATERS THEY SHALL NOT COME NIGH UNTO HIM."





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